

BLOOMINGTON BRIEFING

JANUARY 2026



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NORMANDALE
AND UNIDOS
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AND RECYCLING
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HUNT BEGINS

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CITY CREWS PREPARE AN OUTDOOR ICE SKATING RINK FOR SKATERS TO ENJOY. READ MORE ABOUT OUTDOOR SKATING RINKS AND WARMING HOUSES
THROUGHOUT BLOOMINGTON ON PAGE 6.



BRIEFING

Volume 33, Number 01

The Briefing, published monthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to residents and businesses. Direct your comments and requests for Braille, larger print or computer file to Communications Administrator Janine Hill, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3071; PH 952-563-8819; MN Relay 711; FAX 952-563-8715; Email: jhill@BloomingtonMN.gov Website: BloomingtonMN.gov

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MAYOR'S MEMO

NEW BUSINESSES, HOUSING AND STADIUMS COMING TO BLOOMINGTON

By Mayor Tim Busse

Bloomington continues to grow with new housing options and major investments in school facilities. From affordable senior living to upgraded athletic stadiums, these projects reflect the City's commitment to community, accessibility and quality of life.

Colonial Market opened on October 16 in South Loop, bringing a hybrid American-Latino supermarket that blends traditional American grocery staples with authentic Latin American foods, baked goods and restaurant offerings along with a liquor store.

The Rosalyn, a 128-unit senior apartment community at American Boulevard West and Lyndale Avenue South, is nearing completion. The project includes units at various affordability levels and ground-level retail.

Ever Apartments, located at 6701 W. 78th St., is also nearing completion with 208 new units, including 19 affordable units and a pad for an approved 11,000-square-foot freestanding daycare to be constructed in the future.

Bloomington Public Schools recently completed new stadiums at Jefferson and Kennedy high schools, replacing the shared Bloomington Stadium. Each campus now features turf fields, seating for 2,500, new lighting, sound systems and concession areas, giving both schools a dedicated home field for the first time. Dedication ceremonies were held in October, following first games in September.

The stadium projects were supported by \$400,000 in community donations and a \$400,000 grant from the Minnesota Vikings and NFL Foundation.

For more information about developments in Bloomington, visit blm.mn/dev.

BLOOMINGTON VOTER TURNOUT REMAINS STRONG

Bloomington voters elected three City Council members in the 2025 municipal election. Dwayne Lowman was reelected to represent Council District 1. Shawn Nelson was reelected to represent Council District 2. And Danielle Robertson was elected to an at-large seat for her first term on the City Council. They were sworn in on January 5.

Voter turnout was 27.8%, with 16,477 of Bloomington's 59,306 registered voters casting ballots. Of those, 3,500 voted absentee, including 2,322 who voted early in person at Civic Plaza.

City Clerk Jamy Hanson expressed gratitude to the many people who made the election possible.

"Bloomington's elections rely on teamwork across every department," Hanson said. "Thank you to our election judges, staff and community members who helped ensure a smooth and secure election process."

CITY COUNCIL APPROVED 2026 PROPERTY TAX LEVY AND BUDGET

On December 15, the City Council approved Bloomington's 2026 property tax levy and general fund budget with a 6.96% levy increase. The approved levy is 2.48% lower than the City's preliminary proposal of a 9.44% increase and below the average preliminary 2026 levy increase for Minnesota cities of 8.7%. To learn more about the 2026 budget, visit blm.mn/budget.

[BLOOMINGTONMN.GOV](http://BloomingtonMN.gov)



Top photo, left to right: Corey Crowder, Amal Warsame and Amy Fairgrieve of Normandale's equity and inclusion team.
Bottom photo: Daniel del Toro, co-founder of Unidos MN, front and center, and other Unidos staff and volunteers.

NORMANDALE AND UNIDOS MN RECEIVE 2025 OMAR BONDERUD AWARD

Each year, the Human Rights Commission presents the Omar Bonderud Award to one or more individuals or organizations in recognition of their significant contributions to advancing human rights in Bloomington.

The 2025 recipients are Normandale Community College's equity and inclusion team and Unidos MN. Normandale was recognized for its ongoing work to create an inclusive campus through equity-minded practices and professional development. Unidos MN was honored for supporting immigrant and underserved communities through education, advocacy and civic engagement.

"Our work supports the college's goals around equity, completion and campus culture," said Amy Fairgrieve, equity and inclusion projects coordinator at Normandale. "We believe in the value of education and in our students. When our employees feel a sense of belonging and confidence at work, we can better support our students to succeed."

Learn more about the award and past recipients at blm.mn/bonderud.

LAST CALL FOR EXHIBITORS: EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPO

Do you have a business that serves families with children ages five and under? Don't miss your chance to connect with local parents and caregivers at the Early Childhood Expo Saturday, April 11, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road.

This fun, family-friendly event links families to trusted early learning resources, services and products. If your organization supports young children and their caregivers, we want you there!

To be considered as an exhibitor, register by February 6 at blm.mn/expo26. Fees are \$50 for nonprofits and \$200 for for-profits. Proof of licensure or insurance may be required.

Questions? Contact Equity and Inclusion Program Manager Amanda Crombie at acrombie@BloomingtonMN.gov.

STUDENTS WILL PUT KNOWLEDGE TO THE TEST AT THE CIVICS BEE

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, February 3, 7 p.m., and head to Bloomington Civic Plaza for a night of excitement, school spirit and academic excellence at the Bloomington Civics Bee championship.

Students from Valley View, Oak Grove and Olson Middle Schools will compete in a fast-paced quiz testing their knowledge of government, democracy and civic responsibility. Mayor Tim Busse will take the stage as quizmaster, firing

off questions that could challenge even the most seasoned residents.

This free community event, a partnership between the City, the League of Women Voters Bloomington and Bloomington Public Schools celebrates curiosity, leadership and the power of informed citizenship.

Come cheer on our young scholars as they buzz in for glory and prove that civic pride is alive and well in Bloomington!

NEW PARKING RAMP ORDINANCE TAKES EFFECT

In December, after a year of public input and discussions, the City Council approved a new parking ramp licensing ordinance aimed at improving public safety and infrastructure maintenance.

Beginning in 2026, parking ramps more than five years old will need to undergo regular monitoring and meet licensing standards.

Well-maintained ramps are essential for safe and reliable vehicle storage. This ordinance supports:

Safety. Routine inspections help prevent structural failures, which make ramps safer for users.

Maintenance awareness.

Licensing encourages property owners to stay on top of repairs and meet State Building Code standards.

Data collection. Information gathered will guide future infrastructure planning.

If you have questions or want more information, contact Building Official Bernadette Gillespie at bgillespie@BloomingtonMN.gov or 952-563-4709.

CEO START: A LAUNCH PLAN FOR YOUR DREAM BUSINESS

Got a business idea ready to take off? Turn your vision into action with CEO Start, a hands-on program from the City of Bloomington and Hennepin County designed to help entrepreneurs build, refine and pitch their ventures.

From March 10 to May 19, you'll join a group of 15 participants for a 10-week program covering business fundamentals, networking and pitching skills. The program culminates in a three-minute live pitch where you will showcase your business idea to an audience of potential supporters and partners.

If you're eager to sharpen your business strategy, gain real-world feedback and connect with other community innovators, apply at blm.mn/ceo.

Applications are open January 7 to February 4. Don't miss your chance to develop your business with confidence. Apply today!



2026 GARBAGE AND RECYCLING CALENDAR

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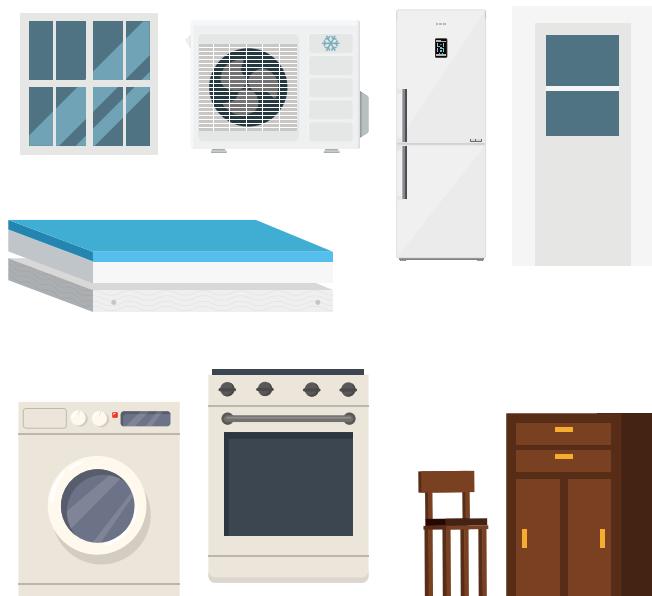
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WHAT IS ACCEPTED AT THE CURB



WHAT IS NOT ACCEPTED AT THE CURB



PREVENT FROZEN PIPES

Extended periods of colder temperatures can cause water meters and indoor water pipes to freeze. To help prevent this, keep your heating system on and allow warm air to circulate around the pipes and water meter by opening any doors or panels where they are located. Water meters can be found indoors where the water enters your home, which is usually in the laundry room or near the furnace.

If additional warmth is needed, consider using a space heater in rooms where pipes may be at risk (never leave heat sources unattended), and for extra protection, wrap exposed water pipes with foam insulation.

If you plan to be away from home for an extended period, contact Bloomington Utilities to request that your water service be turned off at the street. A \$50 fee applies for both the shut-off and the reconnection services. For more information, visit the City's website or call Bloomington Utilities at 952-563-8777.

CURBSIDE CLEANUP COMING IN APRIL

Curbside Cleanup is offered every other year, occurring only in even-numbered years, which means it'll be back in 2026. The program allows residents to dispose of certain large or hard-to-manage items that are not accepted through regular trash pickup.

On their assigned Saturday, participants may place a limited quantity of appliances and bulky trash at the curb for collection. More details about which items are accepted, and which are not, will also be included in the *March Briefing*.

NEW IN 2026: BUNDLED BRUSH NO LONGER ACCEPTED.

For questions about Curbside Cleanup, visit blm.mn/curbside or call 952-563-8760.

To learn how to dispose of items not accepted at the curb, visit the Green Disposal Guide on Hennepin County at blm.mn/green-dispose or call 612-348-3777.

2026 CURBSIDE CLEANUP SCHEDULE

East of Portland (Monday hauling district) April 4

Penn to Portland (Tuesday hauling district) April 11

France to Penn (Wednesday hauling district) April 18

Normandale to France (Thursday hauling district) April 25

West of Normandale (Friday hauling district) May 2

SHOP LOCAL AT THE WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Enjoy the best of Bloomington's local goods without braving the cold at the indoor Winter Farmers Market. Stop by Saturday, February 14, or Saturday, March 14, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road.

From syrup to cookies, bread, bagels, cake and more, you'll find a delicious variety of locally made foods and handcrafted goods from dozens of Minnesota vendors, including Bell's Maple Syrup, Flour Power Cookie Co., Great Harvest Bread Co., Jersey Girl Bagels, Mad Hatter Cake Co. and many others.

A full vendor directory and market details are available at blm.mn/market.



SHAPING HEALTHY FUTURES: MEET PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE AARIN UREVIG

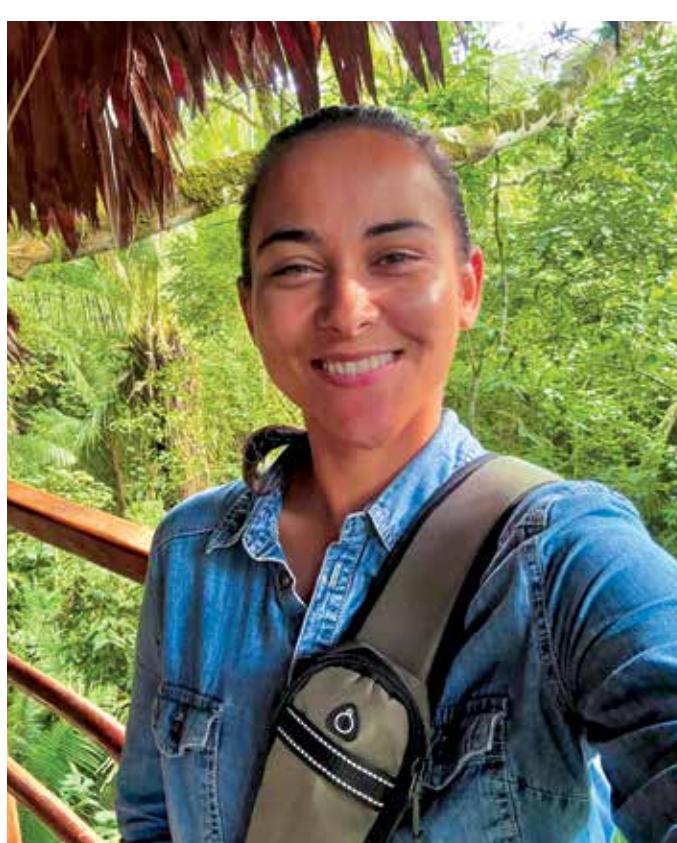
For the past four and a half years, Aarin Urevig has supported Bloomington families as a public health nurse in the Family Home Visiting program, helping parents prepare for birth, navigate the newborn stage and connect with community resources.

Aarin recently earned her Master of Public Health in maternal and child health with a minor in Public Policy. Her studies explored how public health policy and partnerships can strengthen breastfeeding support and equitable care.

"I'm passionate about helping families," Aarin said. "Public health is about meeting people where they are and making sure every parent has what they need to give their child a healthy start."

Aarin also serves as a food advisor in the Minnesota National Guard, where she ensures service members have access to safe food and water.

Outside of work, Aarin enjoys planning her next house project, camping, traveling (recently to the Amazon rainforest) and cozy mornings with a chai latte and her parrot, Char.



MANAGE UTILITY BILLS WITH FREE RESOURCES

Join your neighbors at Utility Bill Skills, a resource fair that offers valuable resources to help you manage and lower costs on your utility bills. Upcoming resource fairs will be held Wednesdays, January 28 and February 25, 2-4 p.m., at the Penn Lake Library, 8800 Penn Ave. S.

Representatives from Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota, Community Action Partnership of Hennepin County and the City of Bloomington solid waste and sustainability teams will be on hand with resources to help you save money on electric, gas, water and waste bills.

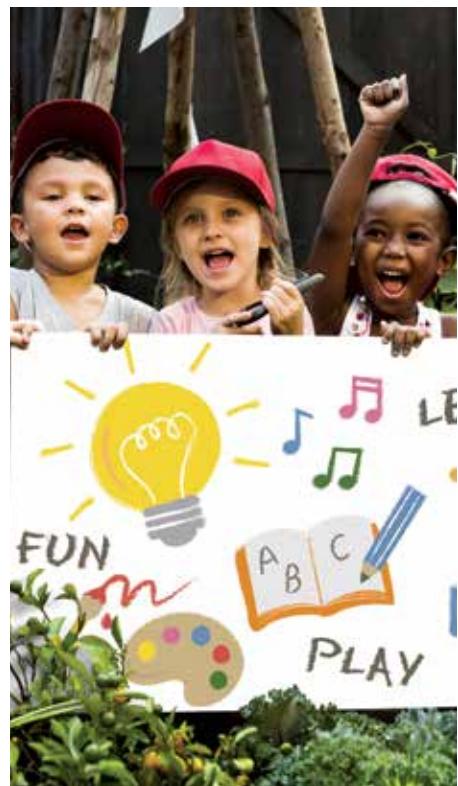
Enjoy complimentary snacks, coffee and tea as you learn how to navigate your utility bills, apply for assistance and implement resource-saving tips for your home. For more information, visit blm.mn/billskills.



SKATE SCHOOL REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 2

Learn to skate or sharpen your skills this season. Registration for Session 3 (early spring) of Bloomington's Skate School opens February 2. Classes are available for all ages and skill levels, from first-time skaters to those refining techniques for hockey or figure skating.

Lessons take place at the newly renovated Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 W. 98th St., in a fun and supportive environment. Visit blm.mn/big for schedules, pricing and online registration.



SUMMER JOBS AVAILABLE WITH PARKS AND RECREATION

Spend your summer making a difference in your community. Bloomington Parks and Recreation is hiring for seasonal positions at the Bloomington Family Aquatic Center, summer camps and parks and recreation facilities.

These jobs offer valuable experience, competitive pay and the chance to work in a fun, supportive environment. Most jobs are open to people 16 and older.

Apply today at blm.mn/prjobs.

BLOOMINGTONMN.GOV

NEW MURAL WELCOMES VISITORS TO BIG FROM FROZEN PONDS TO STATE-OF-THE-ART RINKS

Visitors to the Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 W. 98th St., have a colorful new reason to stop by. A striking 90-foot mural by Minnesota artist Adam Turman was installed on October 28, transforming the main entrance into a celebration of ice skating.

The mural traces skating and hockey from frozen ponds and backyard rinks to today's state-of-the-art ice arenas. Blending realistic imagery with abstract, it captures the motion, excitement and community spirit that have defined Bloomington's skating history.

"When I submitted my bid, I knew right away this was a project I wanted to do," said Turman. "The Ice Garden has such a rich legacy, and I wanted the mural to feel alive, like the action on the rinks."

Eagle-eyed visitors will also find a few hidden gems tucked within the design, such as a smiley face in the roaring crowd and the elegant grooves left by figure skaters.

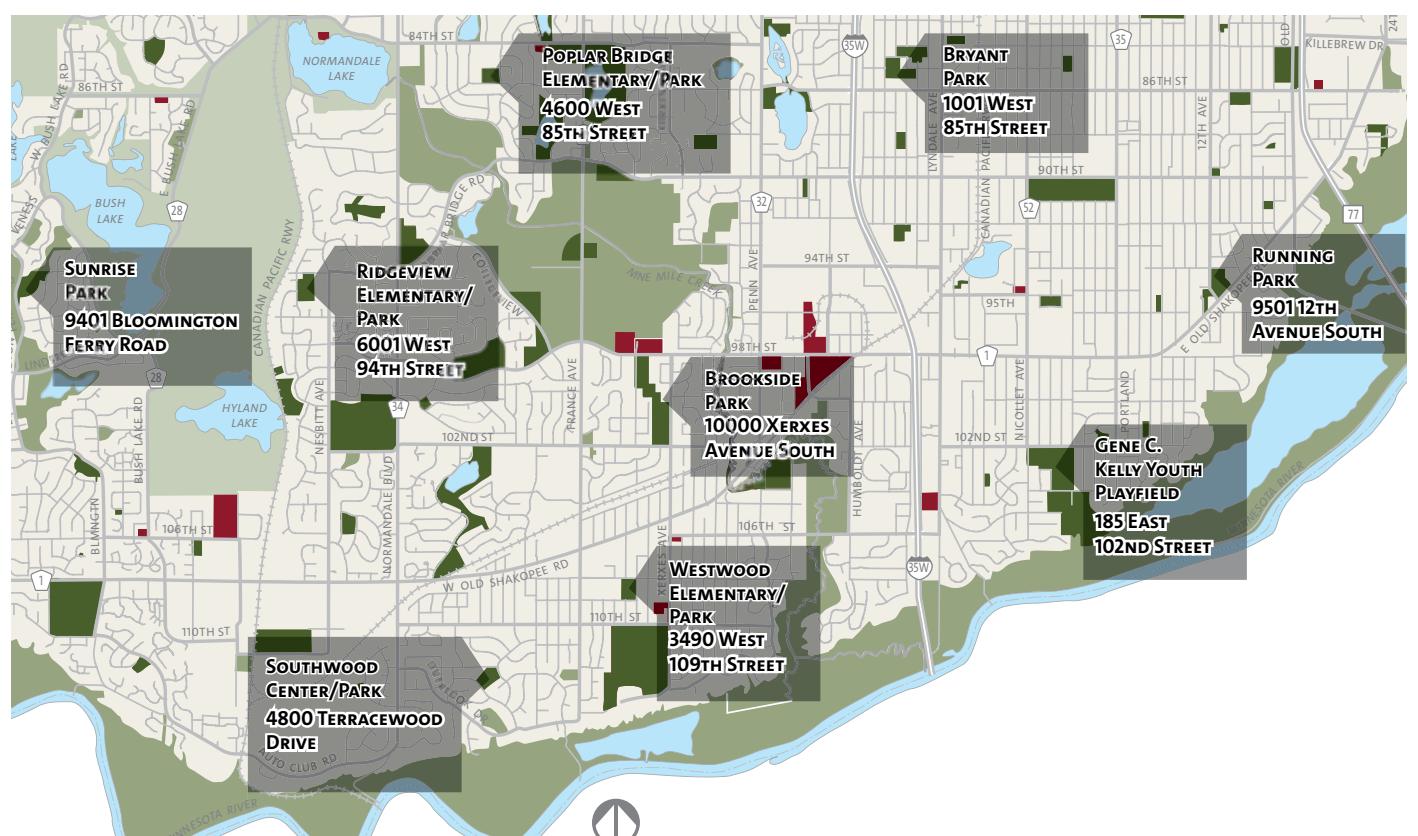
Stop by the Bloomington Ice Garden to experience the mural up close and celebrate generations of community pride.

WINTER OUTDOOR PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS 50+

Bloomington will offer a variety of outdoor recreation programs for residents age 50 and older this winter. Activities such as ice fishing and snowshoeing will be scheduled throughout January, February and March, weather permitting.

If outdoor recreation isn't for you, Bloomington also offers many indoor programs year-round for residents 50 and older. Options include music, cards, crafts, movies, educational presentations and exercise classes.

For a full list of programs with dates and locations, visit blm.mn/adultprograms. Registration is available at blm.mn/webtrac.



Every rink has a warming house and is open for general skating and outdoor hockey. Running and Westwood parks have two rinks.

OUTDOOR SKATING RINKS AND WARMING HOUSES

Embrace the season at Bloomington's outdoor skating rinks, which are scheduled to remain open through mid-February, weather and ice conditions permitting. Rink lighting operates daily from 4:30-10 p.m.

Warming houses are open during the following hours, pending staff availability:

- Monday through Thursday: 4-8 p.m.
- Friday: 4-9 p.m.
- Saturday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m.
- Sunday: 12-8 p.m.

For rink locations and more information, visit blm.mn/rinks. For ice condition updates, call 952-563-8878, option 3.



ENJOY SEASONAL FUN AT WINTER FETE

Winter Fete offers so many ways to enjoy what Minnesota winter has to offer. Each winter, Parks and Recreation embraces the icy conditions and chilly temperatures with activities that bring people outside to have fun. Activities include an introduction to ice fishing, Blades and Bites, fat tire bike riding and more. Read on to learn about some of the 2026 Winter Fete activities. Or, to see a full schedule of 2026 Winter Fete activities, visit blm.mn/winterfete.

SLEDSTRAVAGANZA PROVIDES FUN-FILLED AFTERNOON

Enjoy an afternoon of sledding, campfires and s'mores at the annual Sledstravaganza hosted by Bloomington Parks and Recreation. Brookside Park's sledding hill is suitable for all ages and is ideal for sledding, tubing and tobogganing. Please note that bobsleds are not permitted.

The sledding event is Monday, January 19, 3:30-5:30 p.m., at Brookside Park, 10000 Xerxes Ave. S. The event is weather dependent, so check blm.mn/winterfete for updates or cancellations as the dates approach. The backup date is February 6.



ANGLING FOR A GOOD TIME: FAMILY ICE FISHING AT BUSH LAKE

This winter, join Bloomington Parks and Recreation in partnership with Fishing for All for an exciting ice fishing experience at Bush Lake. These fun, family-friendly sessions offer a great way to explore the beauty of Bush Lake during the colder months.

Experienced guides will provide all necessary equipment and demonstrate basic ice fishing techniques. No fishing license is needed and all fish caught will be released back into the lake. All equipment will be provided. The fee is \$12.50 per person. Children must have adult supervision and be eight years of age or older. There are 20 spots open per session. Register online at blm.mn/webtrac.

DATES FOR THE PROGRAM:

Sunday, January 25: 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-3 p.m.
Sundays, February 8 and 22: 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-3 p.m.

For more information and to register, visit blm.mn/youth-programs.



FIND HIDDEN TREASURE IN THE ANNUAL MEDALLION HUNT

Bloomington Parks and Recreation invites residents to participate in the seventh annual medallion hunt. A hockey-puck-sized medallion will be hidden in one of Bloomington's 97 parks and it's up to you to find it. Starting January 13, two new clues will be released each week on Tuesdays and Fridays, with the hunt continuing until February 13 or until the medallion is found. Follow the clues at blm.mn/winterfete or on the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Facebook page at facebook.com/blm.mn.parks for a chance to win a prize package!

KICK THE WINTER BLUES AT BLADES AND BITES

Enjoy skating and fun for the whole family at the third annual Blades and Bites event on Saturday, January 31, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Bryant Park, 1001 W. 85th St.

Food will be available for purchase at food trucks. Attendees will be eligible for fun games and giveaways, while supplies last.

A limited number of ice skates will be available to rent for free. Participants are welcome to bring their own skates.

This event is weather dependent. Call 952-563-8878, option 3, for the latest if there is inclement weather.

Visit blm.mn/blades to see a recap video of the inaugural event.

PEEK INTO THE PAST AT THE WINTER HISTORY FESTIVAL

Experience winter's beauty at the 18th annual Winter History Festival on Saturday, February 7, 1-3 p.m., at Pond Dakota Mission Park and the Historic Pond House, 401 E. 104th St. Attendees will be able to play outdoor games like Fox and Geese in the snow.

Learn how to use snowshoes and take a naturalist-guided snowshoe walk in the river valley. Snowshoes will be provided.

Warm up by the Pond House fireplace and see ways leather was used by early settlers and the tools they used to make what they needed. Then stamp your own leather key fob to take home.

This is a free event. No registration required.



A FRESH LOOK FOR POLICE VEHICLES

Bloomington Police Department squad cars are getting a fresh new look that reflects both tradition and pride in service.

Officers voted on the final vehicle wrap design in September 2025. The new look features a sleek black and metallic silver color scheme that blends a modern style with the classic black-and-white patrol you've seen on the road.

"The design reflects the professionalism and pride our officers bring to the job every day," said Chief Booker Hodges.

Vehicles will receive the new graphics gradually as part of the department's regular fleet maintenance cycle. So far, eight squads have been updated, with most of the fleet expected to transition by fall 2026.

JOIN THE BLOOMINGTON POLICE RESERVE UNIT

Looking for a meaningful way to give back? The Bloomington Police Reserve Unit offers residents a hands-on opportunity to support public safety while gaining valuable experience.

Reserve officers are volunteers from all walks of life. Some want to explore law enforcement careers; others are simply dedicated to serving their community. They assist with non-criminal police functions such as traffic and crowd control at events, business and park checks, and respond to emergencies or community callouts.

Reserve officers typically work a couple evening shifts each month and attend monthly meetings for ongoing training. New members complete an in-house Reserve Academy covering patrol tactics, first responder skills, defensive tactics and more. Uniforms and equipment are provided at no cost.

Applicants must be at least 20 years old, hold a valid driver's license, have a clean record and commit to about 10 volunteer hours per month.

Applications are accepted year round. Download an application at blm.mn/police-programs and submit your form via email to BPDReserves@BloomingtonMN.gov or deliver it to the Bloomington Police Department, 1800 W. Old Shakopee Road.

MEET A POLICE OFFICER: SERGEANT JOHN GARIBAY

SERVING WITH DEDICATION AND COMPASSION

Sergeant John Garibay has served with the Bloomington Police Department for more than 14 years, providing leadership, supervision and guidance that reflect the department's mission and core value of respect. Over his career, he has taken on a wide range of roles, including patrol supervisor, public order unit supervisor, crime scene technician and crisis negotiations team member.

John holds a bachelor's degree in law enforcement and a master's degree in criminal justice administration and leadership. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in counseling and psychological services. A U.S. Army veteran, he served as a military police officer with the Minnesota Army National Guard from 1999 to 2022 and as a Hennepin County Deputy Sheriff before joining BPD in 2011.

"A good police officer serves with integrity, empathy and spirit," John said, emphasizing the importance of listening, building trust and treating everyone with respect. He credits his family and mentors for their unwavering support, keeping him grounded and inspired to serve with dedication and compassion.



LOSS Team members from BPD and SAVE, and community volunteers pictured above.

POLICE JOIN SAVE TO LAUNCH LOSS TEAM TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AFTER SUICIDE

The Bloomington Police Department has teamed up with Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE) to bring Minnesota's first Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) team to the community.

The LOSS team provides immediate, compassionate support to individuals and families who have lost a loved one to suicide. When called by Bloomington Police, trained volunteers, many of whom are suicide loss survivors themselves, respond to the scene to offer comfort, connection and guidance to local mental health and grief resources.

"The Bloomington Police Department wants to ensure those who need help receive it quickly and with care," said Outreach and Engagement Coordinator Katie Zerull. "This program allows us to walk alongside survivors as they navigate the loss of a loved one."

BPD's LOSS team, launched last fall, and SAVE are still recruiting and training volunteers. To learn more or volunteer, email save@save.org.

MEET A FIREFIGHTER: CAPTAIN CHAD BAUER FROM UTILITIES TO THE FIRE LINE

Captain Chad Bauer's path to the Bloomington Fire Department was unique and built on dedication and heart. After 20 years with the Bloomington Utilities as a senior utility operator, Chad made a bold move. He became a firefighter to give back to the community he calls home.

Since joining BFD in 2013, Chad has steadily climbed the ranks, from part-time firefighter to full-time captain at Station 1. Along the way, he's leaned on the support of his wife Leah and their three kids, Emmett, Clara and Fritz, as well as his close-knit team at the station.

What keeps him going? "It's a fun and rewarding career, full of great people," Chad said.

When he's not on duty, you'll find Chad outdoors with his family, camping, boating, fishing or cheering at local sporting events.

CHAD'S FIRE SAFETY TIP

Clear snow and debris from fire hydrants near your home. It could save precious seconds in an emergency.

